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Emergency Order
June 12, 2003

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services has investigated illness in at least twenty-one Wisconsin residents with onsets of illness in May and June 2003 who have had recent contact with prairie dogs or other sick animals that have been in contact with prairie dogs. Some of the prairie dogs have exhibited signs of illness. Human illness includes fever, cough, rash and swollen lymph nodes. Preliminary laboratory results indicate that the cause of the human illness is a monkeypox virus which is an orthopox virus that could be transmitted by prairie dogs. Monkeypox virus has been also been identified in one of the ill prairie dogs.

In order to protect the health of Wisconsin residents and under authority granted under Chapter 254.51 Wis Stats, the DHFS is issuing this emergency order regarding all prairie dogs and any mammals known to have had contact with one or more prairie dogs since April 1, 2003.

This order prohibits:

1. Importing any prairie dog into Wisconsin.
2. Importing into Wisconsin any mammal known to have had contact with prairie dogs since April 1, 2003.
3. Selling of any prairie dog.
4. Selling of any mammal known to have had contact with prairie dogs since April 1, 2003.
5. Allowing any prairie dog to have contact with any member of the public.
6. Allowing any mammal known to have had contact with prairie dogs since April 1, 2003, to have contact with any member of the public.
7. Releasing any prairie dog to the wild.
8. Releasing any mammal known to have had contact with prairie dogs since April 1, 2003, to the wild.
9. The intrastate sale or offering for sale or offering for any other type of commercial or public distribution, including release into the environment (i.e. the wild), of rodents from Africa including Tree squirrels (*Heliosciurus* sp.), Rope squirrels (*Funisciurus* sp.), Dormice (*Graphiurus* sp.), Gambian Giant Pouched Rats (*Cricetomys* sp.), Brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus* sp.), Striped mice (*Hybomys* sp.).

These prohibitions will remain in effect until the Department has concluded that there is no longer a risk to humans from contact with prairie dogs or with mammals known to have had contact with prairie dogs since April 1. This prohibition does not apply to individuals who transport listed animals to veterinarians or animal control officials or other entities pursuant to guidance or instructions issued by federal, state, or local government authorities.

Jeffrey P. Davis, MD
Wisconsin State Epidemiologist

Date